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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 003307

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TAGS: [KJUS](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [CO](#)  
SUBJECT: GUAJIRA'S UNIQUE SOCIAL PROBLEMS CONTINUE POST  
PARAMILITARY DEMOBILIZATION

Classified By: Political Counselor John S. Creamer.  
Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d)

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Summary  
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11. (C) Community leaders and local officials said security had improved in Guajira since the paramilitary demobilization, but some ex-paramilitaries continued their criminal activities. Several said most of the department's problems were not security related, but reflected entrenched social problems. The Wayuu indigenous population, which represent over 40 percent of the Guajira's residents, possess dual Venezuelan and Colombian citizenship, and have different customs and legal rights, frequently clash with the department's other residents. The Department's border with Venezuela and geographic isolation from the rest of Colombia further complicate security and development. End summary.

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Partial Security Improvements  
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12. (C) In Poloff's trip to Guajira on March 22, Acting Mayor of Riohacha Lain Lopez said security had improved since the paramilitary demobilization; homicides fell from 194 in 2005 to 109 in 2006. Still, some ex-paramilitary members continued their criminal activities. In northern "Alta" Guajira in Uribia, a faction of the ex-paramilitary's North Bloc (approximately 50 members) that did not demobilize was still active. The MAPP/OAS regional analysts said this group--led by a former military officer known as Pablo--was trying to displace the Wayuu to gain control of narcotrafficking routes and other illicit activities. In the remainder of the department, small groups of delinquents use the name of the Aguilas Negras to intimidate the population. Their main activities are extortion, narcotrafficking, and smuggling.

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Public Forces Trying to Maintain the Pressure  
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13. (C) DAS Director John Cuellar said the public forces recently captured 11 ex-paramilitary North Bloc members and several weapons caches. MAPP/OAS analysts noted in southern Guajira, the public forces have conducted several operations against ex-paramilitaries from the Counterinsurgency Wayuu Bloc. The most recent operation took place in Dibulla in late March, when the public forces captured three of its leaders and killed four others. Cartagena Battalion Commander Colonel Roosevelt Leon said the main problem he saw were alliances of small criminal groups. These groups were mainly involved in the logistics of the narco-business. The influx of AK-47s and other automatic rifles from Venezuela is also a concern.

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Manual Eradication Results Questionable  
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14. (C) Col. Leon said the Police were conducting manual eradication of coca crops near the area of operations of the FARC's Front 19 (approximately 250 members) in southern Guajira. Still, the level of coca cultivation and trafficking seemed unchanged despite greater manual eradication efforts. Leon thought manual eradication was less effective than spraying, since the growers replant the fields once the eradicators leave. With spraying, it takes much longer for the growers to be able to use the land again.

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Guajira's Main Problems, Social in Nature  
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15. (C) Secretary of Government Adalberto Redondo said the majority of Guajira's problems were not security related, but stemmed from lack of infrastructure and entrenched social problems. These included high unemployment, lack of access to basic services, invasion of public space, prostitution, displacement, and reintegration of demobilized paramilitary population (338 persons). Lack of access to potable water was the main source of the department's health problems. Moreover, there were over 35,000 displaced persons in the department, most of them located in the capital, Riohacha.

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Unique Social Composition Key Source of Problems  
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16. (C) DAS Director Cuellar said Guajira's geography, large indigenous population, and border with Venezuela required a different approach to establish security and promote development. Cultural differences between the Wayuu and the rest of the population generated social tension. The Wayuu, who represent over 40 percent of the population, have different customs and rights than the rest of the population. Secretary of Government Redondo said the Wayuu's dual Colombian and Venezuelan citizenship and their easy access to Venezuela enables them to smuggle gasoline and other contraband, creating conflict with the rest of the department's residents.

17. (C) Cuellar said Maicao, which borders Venezuela, represents a snapshot of the challenges the department faces because of its unique populace and geographical location. Maicao's high levels of contraband and narcotrafficking--facilitated by the Wayuu's mobility--makes this area difficult. Cuellar said paramilitary leader Jorge 40's North Bloc people killed several Wayuu leaders who had controlled much of Maicao's illegal business in the late 1990s. Many Wayuu fled to Venezuela following the murders. In Venezuela, these Wayuu worked closely with the FARC's 59th Front. With the demobilization of the Northern Block, the Wayuu were returning to Maicao to resume control of the contraband and narco business with the help of the FARC.

18. (C) Fiscalia Sectional Chief Ana Milena Carreno said her

office had a difficult challenge in handling legal disputes while respecting Wayuu culture. Her unit has a total of 30 prosecutors, with each overseeing an average of over 500 cases. Most of the cases involve contraband of gasoline and petroleum from Venezuela. Narcotrafficking related cases were mainly in Alta Guajira and, to a lesser extent, in the Sierra Nevada. She said road conditions were a challenge for her prosecutors and investigators. It could take over eight hours to travel from Riohacha to some remote locations.

Drucker